

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the claims is respectfully requested. Claims 1-17 currently are pending. By way of the present response, claims 1, 5, 7, 10, 12 and 16 have been amended and claims 4, 9 and 15 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Consequently, claims 1-3, 5-8, 10-14, 16 and 17 remain pending for consideration with claims 1, 7 and 12 being independent.

The Office has rejected claims 1, 7 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,229,768 to Kurahayashi et al. (Kurahayashi) and claims 2, 3, 6, 8, 11, 13-14 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kurahayashi in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,341,178 to Parker (Parker). Additionally, on page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicated claims 4-5, 9-10 and 15-16 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claims 1, 7 and 12 have been rewritten to incorporate the subject matter of allowed claims 4, 9 and 15, respectively. Thus, independent claims 1, 7, and 12 are believed to be in condition for allowance and subsequently each of their dependent claims as well.

In view of all of the foregoing, Applicants submit that this case is in condition for allowance and such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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